539 *kùvélò* *vèlèvà.* *Wà púla* *hósi* *háti,* *wákólápó.* *Hósi* *háti,*
at opening of the cave. He asked lion, saying, "Are you well?" Lion said,

*ndá* *vélà* *ènénè.* *Wà* *láleka* *bíndji* *òku iyílà* *vèlèva* *òkù*
"I am sick very." He invited wild dog to enter into the cave to

*vàŋgula* *láhè.* *Bíndji* *wà* *kúmbúlúlá* *háti,* *ndá* *táva,* *pwàí*
talk with him. Wild dog he replied saying, "I should have agreed but

*ndá* *lúmbúka* *dkàsà* *ósi* *àimbà* *òvásò* *kèlèvà.* *Kà* *kúlí*
I noticed tracks all go toward the cave. There are

*dkàsà* *àimbà* *òvásò* *pòsámwà.* *Tcà* *líŋguá* *mbwí* *tcà*
no tracks going toward the outside." That which goes down? (sinks) it

*lùŋgísá* *avá* *và* *ŋwà.*
warns those who swim.

## SIGN LANGUAGE

• 201 Various language signs are in use. The action of throwing a mat on the ground and laying the head on the hands indicates sleep. Inquiry about the health of a father may be made by stroking an imaginary beard. If the father is strong and well the reply will be a flection of the forearm to harden the biceps.

There are dumb signs for numbers:

(1) The right hand is used to bend the little finger of the left hand into the left palm.

(2) The little finger and the one next to it on the left hand are turned over into the palm.

(3) Three fingers are turned inward.

(4) Four fingers are turned inward.

(5) Four fingers and the thumb are turned inward. The thumb is then tapped with the index finger of the right hand.

(6) The right hand is extended and the thumb of the left hand is placed on the little finger of the right hand. This action adds one to five.

(7) The right hand is extended, then the thumb of the left hand is placed on the little finger and the one next to it. This adds two to five.

(8) The thumb of the left hand is placed on the extended little finger, middle finger, and third finger of the left hand.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13



(9) Four fingers of the right hand are placed on the thumb of the extended left hand. 201

(10) The hands are placed together palm to palm.

A very insulting sign is made in this way. The left arm is held up with the fist closed. The left wrist is grasped with the right hand. The left fist is then shaken while the right hand is still grasping the left wrist. "This is done when a man is very angry, and he cannot find words."

A bending forward of the head accompanied by wide opening of the eyes and protrusion of the tongue means "you're a fool."

Shaking the head means "no." If the right hand is shaken in front of the face with the index finger extended, a negative is implied. Nodding the head is an affirmative sign. To indicate absence of anything, or the completion of something, the index finger of the right hand is drawn across the mouth. Rubbing the palms together rapidly has the same significance. In order to call some one the right arm is extended with the palm down. If they summon some one from a distance the arm is lowered, while a scratching movement is made with the fingers. The sign indicating "go away" is a flipping of the hand outwardly, while the arm is extended.

(538) 524

## RIDDLES AND PROVERBS

"There is a red belt round our field. What is it?" The answer is, "red ants." 539

"We have somebody who lies all his life in our field. He always lies on one side." The answer is, "a squash."

"We have a stump in the house that is always burning and always moving." This is a metaphor rather than a riddle. The stump is the log which is pushed forward into the fire. It is always alive yet is gradually dying. The saying is intended to refer to human lives. People are alive but their lives are becoming shorter each day.

"What is it that we eat above and below the ground?" The answer is, "manioc, because the leaves and roots are eaten."

"The turtle cannot climb up on a stump, some one has to put it there." This is said in reference to some person who gains a high position which he could attain only by influence and not through merit. 539

When a person makes threats without being able to fulfil them the following expressions are appropriate: "Hot water does not